

VOTE EXPLANATION

• Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for votes on S. 1177, the Every Child Achieves Act from Monday, July 13, 2015, through Thursday, July 16, 2015. Had I been present I would have voted in favor of invoking cloture on the substitute amendment No. 2089, cloture on the amended underlying bill, and final passage of S. 1177. I also would have voted in favor of amendments Nos. 2169, 2194, 2093, 2176, 2171, 2161, 2241, 2177, 2243, 2247, 2100, and 2242. I would have opposed amendments Nos. 2132, 2162, and 2180.●

EVERY CHILD ACHIEVES ACT

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, it is clear to me that No Child Left Behind was broken and that it was not serving the best interest of children in Michigan or the rest of the country. That is why I voted to support the passage of the Every Child Achieves Act, which moves away from high stakes testing and puts decisions on education back in the hands of our States, school districts, parents, and the teachers, who are in the best position to make those decisions.

However, I continue to have reservations about the Every Child Achieves Act, particularly the changes to formulas that govern how resources are allocated. The bill as drafted will reduce the support that Michigan schools have for recruiting teachers and school leaders at the same time as it reduces support for their professional development. It also cuts the future resources dedicated to the education of the most vulnerable low-income children in Michigan, sending that money to other States, using a formula that effectively rewards States for investing less in education. It is wrong to take resources away from one set of children and give them to another, and then call it equity.

While I appreciate the efforts of the Senator from North Carolina to change his original amendment, the modified version would still have a negative impact on the children of Michigan. This is the reason I voted no on this amendment.

As this bill continues to conference committee, I intend to continue to fight to ensure that every child in Michigan has the best possible access to quality public education and that Michigan is treated fairly in the funding formulas.

OLDER AMERICANS ACT

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I am very pleased to see that the Older Americans Act reauthorization passed the Senate last week. This law, which turns 50 years old this month, provides critical services like home-delivered meals, transportation, and elder abuse protections.

I would like to thank Chairman ALEXANDER and Ranking Member MUR-

RAY for their efforts to pass this bill. I would also like to acknowledge the many organizations representing tens of millions of Americans who worked with me and my staff to get this bill passed, including the National Council on Aging, Meals on Wheels America, AARP, the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, and many others.

While this bill is a good step forward, I would have preferred that it go much further.

Older adults are the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population. Shockingly, 1 in 5 seniors is living on an average income of \$8,300 per year. We learned from the Government Accountability Office last month that nearly 4 million seniors experience food insecurity and do not know where their next meal will come from. Fewer than 10 percent of low-income seniors who need a meal delivered to their homes receive one. There are seniors across the country who may not have enough money to eat dinner tonight.

For the generation that fought to defend democracy and built our great Nation, we must do everything we can to make sure that seniors do not go hungry. Older Americans should not have to choose between buying medicine or keeping a roof over their heads or having food on the table.

Providing home-delivered meals—Meals on Wheels—for seniors is not only the right thing to do, it makes good economic sense. Why is that? If frail seniors do not get the nutrition they need, they are more likely to fall and break a hip and wind up in the hospital emergency room or in a nursing home. At the end of the day, investing in nutrition which keeps seniors healthy actually saves us money by keeping them out of the hospital.

Since 2006 when the Older Americans Act was last reauthorized, the U.S. population over 60 has grown by about 30 percent. Has funding gone up by 30 percent? No. In fact, funding has been basically flat, and when you account for inflation, funding has actually decreased by about 12 percent. I strongly believe we should significantly expand funding for Older Americans Act programs.

The truth is that the priorities we hold—treating seniors with respect, making sure seniors have the food they need—have the overwhelming support of the American people. These principles are among the foundations of a just and fair society where people look forward to growing old. I thank my Senate colleagues for their support of this important reauthorization bill. I hope that my colleagues in the House of Representatives take up and pass this bill swiftly so that it can become law without any further delay.

INNOVATION SCHOOLS
DEMONSTRATION AUTHORITY

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am joined by the chair and ranking

member of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee to discuss one of my amendments, Whitehouse No. 2185, to the Every Child Achieves Act, which would establish an Innovation Schools Demonstration Authority. I thank them for their leadership on this important legislation and join them today to discuss the purpose of the amendment.

Teachers and school leaders possess a unique understanding of the students and communities they serve. My amendment is intended to help schools address these unique needs through increased autonomy from local, State, and Federal regulations. In Rhode Island I have heard from school leaders who would like to extend the school day for struggling students, take ownership over school budgeting and financing or manage their school's human resources but are unable to do so because existing rules and regulations get in the way. The prospects of moving bureaucratic approaches at all three levels of government can be daunting, but this measure is designed to clear a path.

Several States are already experimenting with increased school autonomy. In Massachusetts, where State law allows for innovation status, schools are already benefiting from regulatory flexibility. In Revere, MA, the Paul Revere Elementary School uses regulatory flexibility around staffing, budgeting, scheduling, and curriculum to operate a school model that emphasizes staff collaboration and differentiated instruction. In Falmouth, MA, the Lawrence School is using regulatory flexibility to improve its governance and decisionmaking structure in a way that emphasizes faculty input and satisfaction. In addition to Massachusetts, States as diverse as Colorado, Kentucky, Minnesota, and West Virginia have established State laws that promote innovation through autonomy.

The Innovation Schools Demonstration Authority builds on these efforts by establishing a fast-track process to give public schools relief from the local, State, and Federal regulations that can be barriers to school-based innovation. The program is designed to serve existing public schools, specifically those where teachers, parents, administrators, and members of the community are working together to implement new, evidence-based models of teaching, learning, and school administration. When these existing schools are selected for innovation school designation, they will be able to obtain expedited relief from regulations that would otherwise prevent them from implementing their school vision.

A key element of this program is that the whole school community wants to participate. Innovation schools must demonstrate support from administrators, parents, and at least two-thirds of the current teaching staff. They are encouraged to form advisory boards to bring community